

Dear Members:

**Did you know that the Western Pennsylvania region now has the highest incidence of diabetes among African Americans in the nation?** In 2007, the American Diabetes Association estimated that \$1 of every \$10 of health care costs was associated to diabetes. And, a new federal report predicts that one in three American adults may have diabetes by 2050, thus the number of diabetes patients and the concomitant costs are projected to double or triple in over the next 40 years. Clearly, diabetes is already at an epidemic level and the economic implications cannot be ignored!

Your chamber has given special attention to opportunities to arm you with information and strategies that can help you to weather the anticipated surge in diabetes-related health care costs that may certainly have vast implications for us in this region. In this pursuit, the Chamber has received support to conduct a two-year demonstration project on the awareness, prevention, and treatment /management options for diabetes. The project will consist of quarterly workshops that will benefit not only African Americans, but all small business owners and professionals. The series, entitled "Diabetes: Self Management of a Chronic Disease" is scheduled to begin January, 2011. Our guiding partners include the former Secretary of Health of the Commonwealth, Dr. Calvin Johnson; Dr. Rhonda Johnson, Medical Director at Highmark; Steven B. Shivak, Executive Director of the American Diabetes Association of Western Pennsylvania and Otis Story, Vice President for Business Development, West Penn Allegheny Health Systems.

**In this very important endeavor, we need your input.** National and local businesses are already aware that this epidemic has economic implications that **cannot** be ignored and are preparing to undertake combative strategies. As members of the local business community who are concerned about both the human and economic viability of this region, we can do no less. Healthier lives make for a more productive workplace and greater retention of your employees. The African American Chamber will launch the workshop series with two introductory complimentary lunch meetings:

\_\_\_ **November 18<sup>th</sup>** 12:00 Noon to 1:30 PM                      and or  
\_\_\_ **December 7<sup>th</sup>** 12:00 Noon to 1:30 PM

These sessions are designed to encourage you to share your thoughts and ideas on how we can make this workshop series a model program that results in improved health, a stronger workforce, and improved healthcare costs. We are looking forward to your participation in one, if not both, of these development sessions. Please indicate your date preference (or both) and RSVP to 412-392-0610 or email us at [programs@aaccwp.com](mailto:programs@aaccwp.com).

Sincerely,



Doris Carson Williams  
President and CEO